

1 Claims

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3 What is claimed is:

4
5 1. A computer-implemented system for displaying an estimated duration character in a field,
6 where the estimated duration character is text that indicates that a time period duration is
7 estimated, comprising:

8 a user interface for receiving a duration value string, where the duration value string is
9 text that indicates the time period duration and whether the time period duration is estimated;

10 a parser for separating the duration value string so that it can be interpreted;

11 a storage for storing the separated duration value string; and

12 a display for interpreting the duration value string and for showing the estimated duration
13 character in the field.

14
15 2. The system of claim 1, wherein the duration value string comprises:

16 a duration value, which is the value internally used by the system;

17 a duration display type, which indicates how the duration should be displayed; and

18 an estimated flag, which indicates that the estimated duration character should be
19 displayed.

20
21 3. The system of claim 1 or 2, wherein the storage comprises:

22 a duration value memory for storing the duration value;

23 a duration display type memory for storing the duration display type; and

24 an estimated flag memory for storing the estimated flags.
25

1 4. The computer-implemented method for displaying an estimated duration character in a
2 field, where the estimated duration character is text that indicates that a time period duration is
3 estimated, comprising the steps of:

4 determining if sheet mode or dialog mode should be used, the sheet mode being where
5 the user enters a duration value, where the duration value is the value internally used, and the
6 estimated duration character in the field, and the dialog mode being where the user accesses a
7 dialog box to enter the duration value in a duration field and either enter the estimated duration
8 character in a duration field, where the duration field is a field holding duration information, or
9 checks the estimated field, where the estimated field is a field holding information on whether
10 the duration is estimated; and

11 running the sheet mode or the dialog mode.
12

13 5. The method of claim 4, wherein the steps of determining if the sheet mode should be
14 used comprises the steps of:

15 moving a cursor to the field where the user wants to enter the time period duration; and

16 clicking the cursor once on the field where the user wants to enter the time period
17 duration.
18

19 6. The method of claim 4, wherein the step of determining if the dialog mode should be
20 used comprises the steps of:

21 moving a cursor to the field where the user wants to enter the time period duration; and

22 clicking the cursor twice on the field where the user wants to enter the time period
23 duration or using a tool bar command.
24

25 7. The method of claim 4, wherein the step of running the sheet mode further comprises the
26 steps of:

27 inputting a duration value string, where the duration value string is text that indicates the
28 duration and whether the duration is estimated;

29 separating the duration value string into a duration value, where the duration value is the
30 value internally used by the system, a duration display type, where the duration display type

1 indicates how the duration should be displayed; and an estimated flag, where the estimated flag
2 indicates that the estimated duration character should be displayed;
3 storing the duration value in a duration value memory;
4 storing the duration display type in a duration display type memory;
5 determining if the estimated flag is set to "yes" or "no";
6 storing the estimated flag in an estimated flag memory if the estimated flag is set to
7 "yes";
8 displaying the duration value in the correct duration display type, and the estimated
9 duration character if the estimated flag is stored in the estimated flag memory.

10
11 8. The method of claim 4, wherein the step of running the dialog mode further comprises
12 the steps of:

13 creating copies of the duration fields and the estimated field;
14 inputting the duration value string, where the duration value string is text that indicates
15 the time period duration and whether the duration is estimated;
16 separating the duration value string into a duration value, where the duration value is the
17 value internally used by the system, a duration display type, where the duration display type
18 indicates how the duration should be displayed; and an estimated flag, where the estimated flag
19 indicate that the estimated duration character should be displayed;
20 storing the duration value in a duration value memory;
21 storing the duration display type in a duration display type memory;
22 determining if the estimated flag is set to "yes" or "no";
23 storing the estimated flag in an estimated flag memory if the estimated flag is set to
24 "yes";
25 closing the dialog box;
26 displaying the duration value in the correct duration display type, and the estimated
27 duration character if the estimated flag is stored in the estimated flag memory.

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29 9. The method of claim 8, wherein the step of closing the dialog box comprises the steps of:
30 determining whether the user wants to "OK" or "cancel" the user choice data;

1 duplicating the duration value, the duration display type, and estimated flag if the user
2 wants to "OK" the user choice data; and
3 closing the dialog box without duplicating the duration value, duration display type, and
4 estimated flag if the user chooses "cancel".
5

6 10. The method of claim 7 or 8, wherein the step of separating the duration value string
7 comprises the steps of:

8 identifying the duration value and the duration display type in the duration value string;
9 checking the estimated flag memory to see if any unidentified characters in the duration
10 value string is a default estimated duration character, where the default estimated duration
11 character is the default text that is used to indicate that the time period duration is estimated; and
12 setting the estimated flag to "yes" if any unidentified characters in the duration value
13 string is the default estimated duration character;

14 checking the estimated flag memory to see if any of the unidentified characters in the
15 duration value string is an alternate estimated duration character, where the alternate estimated
16 duration character is alternate text that is used to indicate that the time period duration is
17 estimated;

18 setting the estimated flag to "yes" if any of the unidentified characters in the duration
19 value string is the alternate estimated duration character;

20 removing all default estimated duration characters and all alternate estimation duration
21 characters; and

22 setting the estimated flag to "no" if none of the unidentified characters in the duration
23 value string are not the default estimated duration character or the alternate estimated duration
24 character.
25

26 11. The method of claim 7 or 8, wherein said step of displaying the duration value comprises
27 the steps of:

28 obtaining the duration value;

29 obtaining the duration display type;

30 combining the duration value and the duration display type into a human readable string;

31 checking the estimated flag to see if it is set to "yes" or "no":

1 checking a user option to display the estimated duration character to see if it is set to
2 "yes" or "no";

3 displaying the duration value in the correct duration display type and the estimated
4 duration character if the estimated flag and the user choice are set to "yes"; and

5 displaying the duration value in the correct duration display type if the estimated flag or
6 the user choice is "no".

7
8 12. The method of claim 11, wherein said step of displaying the duration value in the correct
9 duration display type, and the estimated duration character if the estimated flag and the user
10 choice are set to "yes" comprises the steps of:

11 determining the position for the estimated duration character and adding the estimated
12 duration character to the human readable string;

13 determining the default estimated duration character and adding the default estimated
14 duration character to the human readable string; and

15 displaying the duration value in the correct duration display type and the estimated
16 duration character.

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18 12. The method of claim 4, further comprising the step of:

19 allowing the user to select an option to not display the estimated duration character.

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21 13. The method of claim 4, further comprising the step of:

22 allowing the user to select an option to have new tasks have estimated duration characters
23 until the user chooses to enter a duration value.

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25 14. The method of claim 4, further comprising the step of:

26 allowing the user to filter a task list to display only tasks that have estimated duration
27 characters.

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29 15. The method of claim 4, further comprising the step of:

30 designating a summary level task, where a summary level task has subtasks, with an
31 estimated duration character if any of the subtasks have estimated duration characters.